MATWATCH

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GREAT AMERICAN BASH SPECIAL EDITION

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Torch Passes In Baltimore

HE'S THE MAN: STING WINS NWA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP IN BASH EXTRAVAGANZA

BALTIMORE---The Blade Runners have risen to the top.

Repeating the finish of his upset win at STARRCADE '89, Steve "Sting" Borden rolled Ric Flair from a figure-4 leglock attempt into a small package hold to win the NWA world heavyweight championship Saturday night at THE GREAT AMERICAN BASH: NEW REVOLUTION in Baltimore before a national pay-per-view cable audience. Sting joins former UWF Blade Runners partner Rock (Ultimate Warrior Jim Hellwig) as a world champion of America's two top wrestling organizations.

Sting survived an attempt by Flair's Four Horsemen cohorts to make a save two minutes before the end. The Dudes with Attitudes combo of the Steiner Brothers, Junkyard Dog and Paul Orndorff held off the Horsemen in the no-disqualification affair. Ole Anderson, handcuffed to El Gigante (Jorge Gonzales) was never a factor in the match.

In the early going, Sting relied on power, military pressing Flair and not selling any of his chops. An early high dropkick provided a good test of his knee, injured in a post-match melee at TEXAS SHOOTOUT in February. A Flair eye-gouge at 4:30 led to the former champion's first serious offense. But Sting did not sell a suplex and after two clotheslines, scored a 2 3/4 count with a cross body block at 5:25.

Flair went for Sting's knee at 6:12 but missed a figure-four try at 6:45. Sting was tossed onto the entrance runway at 7:45 and Flair stayed with the offense for three minutes until he tried to rail Sting, who did not sell, at 10:12. A Sting backslide scored a 2 3/4 at 12:00. Flair rallied to try a spinning toe hold but Sting escaped and began to point his finger at Flair. A military press brought a 2 5/6 at 13:35, followed by a 2-count suplex and the Stinger splash at 15:31. Sting applied his Scorpion deathlock and the Horsemen came rushing from the curtain but the DWAs stopped them. Flair finally reached the ropes and rallied to try his patented leg-on-ropes pin but Scott Steiner knocked his legs off. Sting added two more near-falls with a rollup and backslide but missed a dive into the turnbuckle and hit his knee.

Flair, sensing victory, tried a fifth time to cinch a figure-4 but Sting, in a less than secure rollup, packaged Flair for the final three-count at 17:02 to an explosive reaction. In a post-match interview, Sting called Flair "the greatest world champion of all time" and added "I have some big shoes to fill and I'll do the best I can. That's all I can do."

The 30-year-old Borden (Sting), who began his career in 1986, becomes the first "character" champion---Dusty Rhodes aside---in NWA history and faces the burden of becoming a standardbearer for the veteran circuit at a time when arena crowds are at a consistent low and the promotion is in its sixth booking regime since Ted Turner bought the group in 1988. Turner executives have pushed for this change since demographic surveys in TBS Research indicated last fall a strong negative rating for Flair among TV viewers nationwide and a positive, younger appeal for Sting. Flair's sixth NWA title reign lasted exactly 14 months amid intense speculation in the last week the veteran champ would either bolt for Titan Sports or agree to an NWA extension.

MATCH RATING: POWERSLAM-PLUS. The match was not the best either has wrestled but did tell a story and had eight two-counts and six submission attempts. The 1988 CLASH I and STARRCADE matches were probably better overall but it accomplished ending the Flair era with a wrestling move and with no run-in.

INCUMBENTS RETAIN 3 OTHER BELTS

Lex Luger held onto the U.S. heavyweight championship with a 12:07 clothesline pin over Mark Callous and DOOM and the Midnight Express retained the NWA world and U.S. tag titles in defenses Saturday night in Baltimore.

U.S. TITLE

Luger's win was in a power match that never clicked with the crowd. Unlike the Luger-Barry Windham match at CHI-TOWN RUMBLE in 1989, this one showed Mark Callous' inexperience.

Mark controlled mid-match and Luger flew over the top at 7:50 but rallied by not selling a suplex at 9:00 and going for his "torture rack." But a spin knocked down ref Mike Atkins and Paul E. Dangerously ran in to clobber Lex with the phone. When Atkins revived, Luger kicked out on 2 3/4. As Callous went for the heart punch, Luger blocked it with his foot, clotheslined Mark and pinned him at 12:07.

RATING: RESTHOLD-PLUS. Not even Paul could generate a lot of heat here.

U.S. TAG TEAM TITLE

This may have been the best American tag match this year. Starting as a Memphis

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TITLE MATCHES (Cont. from Page 1)

street brawl, evolving into a martial arts exchange between Stan Lane and Tracy Smothers, and showing a broad range of aerial and tag maneuvers, the Midnight Express scored the win over the Southern Boys in 17:12.

Beginning with an early brawl, Smothers and Eaton then exchanged heavy savage kicks about four minutes in. At 8:22, Steve Armstrong delivered one of the highest cross body blocks ever on both Lane and Bobby Eaton. Midmatch, Smothers took the brunt of punishment, including an Eaton neckbreaker at 13:08. Smothers finally tagged Armstrong at 16:13 and during a 4-way with the Rebels ready to take the belts, Lane kicked Armstrong in the head off the ropes and Eaton rolled him up for the victory at 17:12. RATING: PILEDRIVER....it's one of the best 17-minute bouts you'll ever see.

NWA WORLD TAG TITLE

In one of two or three on the night which never really clicked with the crowd, DOOM defeated the Rock & Roll Express, trying for a fifth NWA world tag reign, in 15:38.

The power-vs.-speed matchup which had a lot going for it on paper did not spark the 14,000 on hand, even with Robert Gibson several times trying to exhort the fans into "Rock & Roll" cheers.

The match featured 11 two-counts. Ricky Morton scored two of them with a backslide and package on Butch Reed before being thrown over the top. Finally tagging in Gibson at 14:40, Robert hauled Teddy Long in at 15:17 and decked him twice but Reed powered a shoulderblock off the top rope for the win at 15:38. RATING: DRAW.

REVOLUTION REVIEW

BRIAN PILLMAN D. BUDDY LANDELL: A mild surprise, this one had a good mix of wrestling and comedy, although it was evident they weren't showing everything & there were too many Ole '70s-style moves. This one had seven two-counts, including one on a Landell suplex at 6:44. But Brian rallied for his Air Pillman pinfall at 8:36. DRAW-PLUS.

MIKE ROTUNDA D. IRON SHEIK: Finally, a pay-cable win for Mike and with a clean wrestling move. Khoslow delivered the first of several pre-bell attacks and scored a suplex at 6:23 after tossing Mike out. But Mike rallied to take it at 6:50 with a backslide. RESTHOLD.

DOUG FURNAS D. DUTCH MANTEL: This is one which didn't click. The styles did not complement & it didn't get over Doug in a big way. Furnas rippled with a military press at 2:28 and had numerous power and aerial moves. But Mantel went to a lot of mid-match restholds before Doug finally scored the fall at 11:12. RESTHOLD...just too slow & dull.

HARLEY RACE D. TOMMY RICH: I felt bad for both men. Ten years ago, this style with these 2 would have been hot. But at times, the crowd was deader than WRESTLEMANIA. And both went at it with all they have left. A piledriver sent Tommy out at 1:50, followed by a Race suplex. Race was slammed on the floor at 3:49. After two rallies, both went over the top at 6:07. Tommy tried a cross body from the top but Race reversed for the pin at 6:30. RESTHOLD...they honestly tried.

BIG VAN VADER D. TOM ZENK: Not much you can say here other than Leon destroyed Zenk. Tom never scored one offensive move & Vader big splashed his way to a pin in 2:13. RESTHOLD-PLUS...but it's hard to tell how "over" Vader was.

STEINERS D. FREEBIRDS: The makeup's getting a little too heavy on Michael & Jimmy. Scotty scored a huge double clothesline early & Rick bit Michael's butt at 4:00. Scott followed with a suplex and tilt-a-whirl slam on each 'Bird at 6:00. The 'Birds then gained control and at one point double clotheslined Rick on the floor. After a long deficit, Rick tagged Scott, who came home with the Frankensteiner at 12:19. The Steiners gained the win at 13:38 after Garvin had tried a partner switch and failed. POWERSLAM...even though the 'Birds mostly mugged it.

EL GIGANTE/PAUL ORNDORFF/JUNKYARD DOG D. ARN ANDERSON/ BARRY WINDHAM/SID VICIOUS (DQ): Is Jorge Gonzales simply not ready? This is the one critics will question. Gigante was hugely "over" just in appearance but never legally came in. Orndorff carried the offensive for the dominating face team while the fans badly wanted Sid to be a face. JYD didn't sell a few DDT and headcracking tries. But in the midst of a 5-way brawl, JYD was tossed over the top at 9:50 just at the point the crowd expected Gigante, who had never been in the ring during the match, to be tagged in. He roughed up the Horsemen feebly for about eight seconds and the heels ran. DRAW-PLUS...but the finish was a big disappointment.

BASH BEAT

The pacing of this show was far superior to the last two PPVs from a TV standpoint and on the LARRY KATZ SHOW Saturday night, the consensus was this was a strong comeback for WCW. ...For a night of title change, this show needed some kind of music video or major pre-main event dressing room vignette to build the two contenders, perhaps an ABC-type up close and personal profile of Sting, to set up the closing moments before the match from his point of view....Ross' backgrounders were as good as he's ever delivered and again proved why he's the standard....The only serious camera flaw of the night was when a crowd shot popped up as Sting crashed his knee into the turnbuckle moments before the end....The ring entrances again were the most creative in wrestling....Jim Herd is not going to be happy with the audio of the main event when he sees the tape. He has preached about the levels and the crowd intensity both during and post-match never registered as strongly as I'm certain it was....The in-ring and ringside audio was, however, very strong and the only serious glitch was Ross' mike was clipped during one replay....The show did need Tony Schiavone, who was rock-solid on the pre-game show on cable. Gordon Solie is one of my idols but he was far too grim on most of his spots and Schiavone sets the show up as a Brent Musberger or Jim Nantz-type much better....Overall, the show, in my view, was superior to the 1988 BASH and below last year's sizzler. But it was the best since last July and the most important thing, regardless of the rest of the evening, was Sting winning the belt....Even though the Gigante thing was glaring, it was the only DQ finish and four of the eleven matches were definite tape savers....Did anyone notice Harley wearing his WWF "king" tights?....With the endless "Horsemen-save-Flair" bit hopefully mercifully over, it's time to get Sid Vicious out of the gang and give him a major shot. The people want it just like they've long wanted Sting champ.... Probably the best thing for this group is a rest from pay-cable until late October. Three pay shows in 4 1/2 months has been far too much pressure.

END OF AN ERA: IS IT TOO LATE?

If conventional media covered pro wrestling as it did mainline sports, the past week's buildup to the Sting-Flair NWA title switch would have been overshadowed by intense speculation over whether Flair would negotiate out of his TBS contract to join Titan Sports.

The mutterings have frankly been prevalent since two summers ago, when Flair came within an eyelash of becoming Brother Love's mystery guest at the first SUMMER SLAM. Last year after the Flair-Funk BASH topliner, Flair walked out of a meeting with top NWA execs and announced he was "going to work for Vince McMahon," according to sources inside the meeting. He came away as NWA booker for a seven-month period.

Steve
Beverly

Certainly, the celebrated refusal to drop the belt to Lex Luger in a standard Chicago or St. Louis arena show in March exploded into delicate negotiations to extend Flair's NWA pact, an extension most sources believed Flair had agreed to until word leaked that the contract had not been signed in May.

Sources both in and out of World Championship Wrestling, Inc., expected Flair to hold the company up over the title switch Saturday night. Flair, himself, was not exactly allaying the speculation when two MATWATCHers at the NWA Chicago show June 30 overheard Flair saying he had a July 30 start date with Titan Sports, although the words "if I want it," were likely part of that conversation.

As of this writing---and by the time you receive MATWATCH, anything is possible, NWA personnel have been told a Jim Herd trip to Charlotte to negotiate with Flair last Thursday proved successful and the former NWA champion has agreed to an unspecified extension on his deal which ends at the end of 1991.

If true, good. Now, it's time for Flair championship era to permanently end and for Ric to be built, as Terry Funk suggested earlier in the year, into "living legend" status and evolve from the Nature Boy image which has led to one-time popular slogans becoming cliches and interviews which are no longer original. Saturday night marked the end of a spectacular era in pro wrestling but, from this corner, it should have ended two years ago. It became clearly evident at the first CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS Sting was heir for this berth and had Dusty Rhodes and Jim Crockett displayed some creative guts in 1988, this group might not be continuously pulling itself up by the bootstraps. This is not to minimize what Ric Flair is and has done for wrestling. He's long written his legacy. But as I see it, the entire promotion would have been more formidable had it not let the Flair championship era grow stale. When Vince McMahon ended the Hulk Hogan era while Hogan was still on top, it demonstrated risk and courage but, despite the weak crowds with Ultimate Warrior on top, it was a prudent business move to protect Hogan from becoming a cliche himself.

I felt Sting's words were poignant after the win Saturday night about how he has big shoes to fill and "I'll do the best I can...that's all I can do." The stark reality is Sting as champion now has a much heavier banner to carry than he would have in 1988 or even early '89. Six months of Flair-Sting rematches are not the answer here. The NWA needs fresh contenders in the title picture and Sting should be drawn away from the Dudes With Attitudes group if he is to stand as head-and-shoulders above and not "one of the boys."

Realistically, crowds are not going to dramatically jump for Steve Borden's early title reign, if ever. If they don't, it is not his fault. It is the evolution of the business of pro wrestling and its own overexposure. He no doubt will do the best he can and I hope it is not too late. WCW should not panic if sellouts do not magically reappear. As I've stated repeatedly these past two years, the most unhealthy thing for any business is for any one group to become a monopoly. Pardon me if I still possess a wistful desire for the promotion I grew up with to have one more shot at a resurgence.

LINES & PICS FROM THE BASH

BEST LINES - 1. Bob Caudle, on Freebirds bump: "I'd be in bed for a month if I even tried it." 2. Jim Ross, on Teddy Long: "His mouth is so big, he can whisper in his own ear." 3. Ringsiders, to Michael Hayes: "Michael is a bitch!" 4. Paul E. Dangerously, on Lex Luger: "He's a football player. He's not supposed to wrestle that good." 5. Ross, on Landell: "He's got a PhD in shortcuts." 6. Caudle/Ross, on Landell's flexing: (BC) "That's his Atlas pose." (JR) "Is that the before or the after shot?" 7. Ross: "The thing about Jim Cornette---listen to what he has to say and discount 50% of it." 8. Ross, on Corny: "He would just as soon go on a diet as lose these titles." 9. Caudle: "I don't think I'd want to send a kid to kindergarten if Rick Steiner was the teacher." 10. Caudle, on Rick Steiner biting Hayes' butt: "I guess he wanted ham for dinner."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Sting: "Ric Flair is the greatest heavyweight champion of all time." 2. Ross: "I think the Steiners will be at the head of the list as the greatest brother combination ever in wrestling."

BEST PICTURES - 1. Arn Anderson's eyes on seeing Gigante. 2. Rick Steiner biting Hayes' butt. 3. Paul E. on phone to Maury Povich. 4. Landell posing. 5. Stan Lane railing Tracy Smothers. 6. Crowd yelling "faggot" at Jimmy Garvin. 7. 'Birds double suplex on Rick Steiner. 8. Closeup of Sting small package victory.

MATWATCH 25 SCALE

Announcing	4.3
Crowd Enthusiasm	3.2
Production Values	4.0
Quality of Matches	2.6
Overall Excellence	3.4
TOTAL RATING	17.5

THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

GILBERT LEAVES NWA; TURNS LAWLER FACE

LEXINGTON TN---Eddie Gilbert has been granted a release from his NWA contract, which had another nine months to run. Terms were amicable and the release was okayed last Tuesday morning in Atlanta.

NWA senior vice president Jim Herd attempted to get Gilbert to reconsider but the Tennessee native, who has suffered from a shoulder injury the past two months, had decided two weeks ago to seek severance.

Gilbert turned up on the live WMC-TV Memphis USWA show Saturday morning and was involved in an angle where Bill Dundee had "made a deal with the devil (Gilbert)" for help in his feud against Tony Anthony and John Tatum. But Gilbert would not assist, saying such help "required overtime." Eventually Jerry Lawler, headed gradually for a babyface turn, saved Dundee from an attack by Anthony and Tatum and then decked Gilbert.

ORBIT MAGAZINE RATES FLAIR TOPS IN POLL

VIENNA VA---Ric Flair was rated number one in a Top-15 wrestling ranking by SATELLITE ORBIT magazine in its July issue.

Writer John Dunlap said the ratings were from "wrestling experts (who) watched hours of wrestling shows, talked to the leading authorities on the sport and hit the calculators.

Flair, whose first name was spelled Rick, was still described as having "a beautiful woman as his manager, known creatively as 'Woman.'" The ORBIT top 15:

1. Flair 2. Ultimate Warrior 3. Lex Luger. 4. Curt Hennig 5. Kerry Von Erich 6. Sting 7. Hulk Hogan 8. Great Muta 9. Jerry Lawler 10. Wendi Richter 11. Mr. Saito 12. Randy Savage 13. Larry Zbyszko 14. Honky Tonk Man 15. Dusty Rhodes.

KATZ TAPES PILOT FOR CABLE SERIES

BALTIMORE---Local wrestling radio talk host Larry Katz has taped a pilot for a 30-minute talk/magazine wrestling series for cable.

The series, PRO WRESTLING NOW!, was taped at studios in suburban Baltimore June 29. Katz featured a segment, MURPHY'S MUSINGS, with his radio co-host Kimberly Murphy.

Guesting on the pilot were Virginia wrestling headliner Axel Rotten and (by telephone) Ricky Steamboat. Katz is talking to two regional cable networks about the series.

MISSY HYATT'S CONTRACT TO BE HONORED BY NWA

ATLANTA---Despite the departure of Eddie Gilbert from the NWA, Missy Hyatt will still be retained by the promotion for her NWA MAIN EVENT co-host role.

Hyatt's salary had been included as part of Gilbert's contract and with the two divorcing, Hyatt had sought a separation of the contract terms.

NWA officials have agreed to continue Hyatt's share of the undisclosed salary figure.

Pinfall Profile

ORBIT: DELAYED AND UNINFORMED

Casual wrestling fans probably devoured it but the cuurent issue of SATELLITE ORBIT magazine again proves how shallow some stories dealing with the ring in mainline publications often appear.

The six-page feature was impressively laid out with extensive color. The HULK BULK title story resembles one of the recent efforts in the NWA's WRESTLING WRAPUP. But John Dunlap used the same stock quotes from WWF p.r. guru Steve Planamenta which have appeared in at least fifteen other publications on why Titan Sports exploded in 1984: "One was the use of television, which allowed us to go from a local force to a national, even international one. Second was a concise marketing plan. And third, we had a standard bearer in Hulk Hogan."

Dunlap reviewed WRESTLEMANIA VI almost match-by-match but the show is three months old. Plus, though listing the ESPN "Legends of World Class" show, the article failed to mention the satellite feed of the weekly USWA show for dish owners or its Saturday night slot on KTVT/Dallas, a superstation.

However, Dunlap does detail the court troubles of WWF stars in recent years, including the out-of-court settlement of comedian Richard Belzer in his suit against Hulk Hogan for a 1985 incident on Belzer's Lifetime Television talk series, and the assault charges which jailed Jake Roberts in Florida after a dispute with a man last year.

Dunlap's top-15 was a bit out-of-date. Honky Tonk Man has not been a significant enough star in the last two years to merit a No. 14 rating and the ranking of Kerry Von Erich ahead of Sting make one wonder what was in Dunlap's Kool-Aid.

For satellite dish owners not heavily enlightened, the wrestling feature may provide an adequate diversion but hardcore fans will have a field day picking at the shallow side of its coverage. However, its limited focus on the NWA, as opposed to nearly four full pages on the WWF, may verify the national perceptions of Ted Turner's group versus New York.

MATWATCH HOTLINE (901) 664-9246

The line will be open all day but please don't expect a return call unless you have extremely critical news. I'll get to those I can but with 800 subscribers, it's not possible nor financially feasible to contact you all.

TV TEMPO

July 2-8

(WWF/SYND.) - [CHALLENGE]: Dusty Rhodes d. Bob Bradley; Rick Martel d. Brady Boone; Tugboat d. Doug Garlets; Dino Bravo d. Jim Powers; Koko B. Ware d. Dale Wolfe; SEGMENT: Summer Slam; Orient Express d. Jim McPherson/Steve Hardy. BOMB-PLUS.
[SUPERSTARS]: Bad News Brown d. Mike Vee; Jimmy Snuka d. Jim Duffy; Rhythm & Blues d. McPherson/Skaaland; BRO. LUV: Jim Duggan presents Nikoli Volkoff w. American flag; Randy Savage d. Jim Brunzell; Bossman d. Hardy; Demolition d. Tony Ulysses/Mike Pocari; UPDATE: Faces & heels speculate on Hogan's return; Tito Santana d. Buddy Rose. RESTHOLD.

(PRO WRESTLING '90) - Goliath d. Mike Berman; Bugman Michaels d. Vince Van Dooley; From FIVE-STAR: Sam Houston d. Johnny Mantel by DQ after attack; CLASSIC: Bill Dundee d. Wendell Cooley; Death Row d. Allen Horne/Rick Ryder; Abdullah the Butcher d. Hunter Thompson; GA. BELT VS. BULLROPE BELLS: Nick Busich d. Tony Gage when Gage tries to grab bells to beat Busich, Chris Walker grabs other end & Gage hits self with bells and loses. RESTHOLD.

(NWA/SYND.) - [WORLD WIDE]: Tommy Rich d. Davey Johnson; Paul Orndorff d. Mike Thor; Buddy Landell d. Stanley Little Bear; Brian Pillman d. J.D. Wolf; Star Blazer d. Mark Kyle; DOOM d. Jim Hardtine/Littlebear; Other winner: Stan Hansen. BOMB-PLUS.
[NWA PRO]: Freebirds d. Zam Panzer/Tim Parker; Southern Boys d. Joe Cazana/Barry Horowitz; Steiners d. Dutch Mantel/Paul Sampson; DANGER ZONE: DOOM/Teddy Long blow up at Paul E. for showing clips of DOOM getting hammered by Rock & Roll Express. Paul blames it on Jackie Crockett; Johnson d. Hansen by DQ for choking; Orndorff d. Kyle; DOOM d. Joe Defuria/Dave Reardon but R&R dropkick Reed after. BOMB-PLUS.
[MAIN EVENT]: (From CLASH XI) Mark Callous d. Pillman; Samoans d. Tom Zenk/Mike Rotunda; (OTHERS) Ralph Hodges d. Hansen by DQ when Hansen refuses to stop using cowbell; Pillman d. Lee Scott; Bam Bam Bigelow d. Thor. RESTHOLD.

(USWA/SYND.) - [CHALLENGE]: Chico Torres d. Jimmy James; LUMBERJACK: Gary Young d. Kerry Von Erich; ANGLE: Jeff Jarrett, Brickhouse Brown refuses Skandor Akbar's $15,000 offer Uptown Posse to join Devastation because "that's just enough for me," so Reggie B. Fine/Sweet Daddy Falcone turn on Brickhouse until Jarrett saves Brick from burn by Ak's cigar & Jarrett/Brown escape before Devastation runs in; B.J. Travis/Terry Usher d. Jarrett/Jeff Gaylord when Jarrett decks Gaylord & Travis scores pin; $20,000 WINNER-TAKE-ALL: Angel of Death/Falcone d. Jarrett/Travis when ref catches Jeff using loaded glove Torres used on B.J. RESTHOLD-PLUS.
[BEST OF CHAMPIONSHIP]: (From Mid-South) Dundee-John Tatum-Tessa angles; Tatum d. Terry Overbean; Joey Maggs d. Harry Haines; Dundee d. Ward; Jarrett/Travis d. Dog of War/Bob Germany; Scott Braddock d. Ben Jordan; Falcone/Torres d. Usher/Frogman LeBlanc. BOMB-PLUS.

(LPWA) - Big Mo double countout vs. Black Venus; The Beast d. Brittany Brown; Linda & Adrian Street d. Bad Girl/Bugaloo Brown by DQ. RESTHOLD.

(ICW) - {RECAP} Undertakers-Wild Bunch; Ray Oddyssey d. The Russian; Super Mario d. Mike Fortune; Vic Steamboat d. The Henchman by DQ but Steamboat is attacked & hair is cut; Bob Orton Jr. d. Reed; Tony Atlas d. Hoss. BOMB.

(SOUTHEASTERN) - Assassin/Killer Kyle d. David Young/Ralph Hodge; Luke Graham Jr. d. Jim Boss; Denny McCormick d. Gold Star; Moondog Max d. Chief Little Lynn; TV53 TITLE: Larry Santana d. Ebony Austin when Moondog Max runs in. BOMB.

SCALE: PINFALL! Must See PILEDRIVER - Excellent. POWERSLAM - Good. DRAW - Average. RESTHOLD - Fair. BOMB - Poor. PLUS - Midscale.

(WWF/USA) - [PRIME TIME]: Tugboat d. Pez Whatley; Santana double countout vs. Akeem; Snuka d. Duffy; BRO. LUV: Koko B. Ware; Earthquake d. Mark Thomas but Jim Duggan saves with 2x4 after 'Quake stomps Thomas' Hogan bracelet; Martel d. Boone; Rhodes d. Bradley; COBB COUNTY: Ted DiBiase w. Bossman's "coach" Bratten; I-C TITLE: Curt Hennig d. Hercules Hernandez. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(CNWA) - Brad Young d. Eagle by DQ; Ballplayer d. Gentlemen Jim Jordan; Biff Wellington d. Lyn St. Clair; Desiree Petersen d. K.C. Houston; Akam Singh d. Jerry Morrow by DQ. RESTHOLD.

(USWA/WMC) - Jerry Lawler d. Deuce Mason; (From MID-SOUTH) [USWA TITLE] Snowman d. Lawler when Downtown Bruno knocks Lawler's foot off ropes; ANGLE I: Wild Things/Bruno crash Lawler's interview & Lawler runs them off w. baseball bat; Snowman d. T.D. Steel; Wild Things d. Ben Jordan/Tim Hall; (MID-SOUTH) Dundee d. Tony Anthony & Tessa-Dirty White Girl brawl before Tatum jumps Dundee & Bill is double piledriven until Rex King/Joey Maggs save; ANGLE II: Dundee says he "made a deal with the devil," paying $5,000 to Eddie Gilbert for help Monday night at Mid-South. DWBs/DWG attack Dundee/Tessa & Eddie doesn't lift a finger, telling Dundee help on TV requires overtime pay; Dundee d. Ken Wayne when DWBs jump Bill but Eddie grabs Tessa by hair & drags her until Lawler decks Eddie, makes save and agrees to team with Dundee Monday night; (VIDEO) Cowabunga (Chris Champion) does music kung fu; NON-TITLE: DWBs d. Maggs/King when Lawler/Dundee run in & bash DWBs w. bat & trash can. POWERSLAM-PLUS.

(IWA) - Chief Thunder Mountain d. New Jersey Nightmare; Boy Gone Bad d. McPherson; David Isley d. Larry Winters; Sonny Beach d. Dennis Allen; Ray Oddyssey d. Professional; Cousin Luke d. Ivan Koloff by DQ; Kerry Von Erich vs. Larry Cameron no contest. BOMB.

(CHI. CHAMPIONSHIP) - Scott Reynolds vs. Tony DeVito no con.; Terry Hammerskjold d. Master Disaster. DOUBLE BOMB.

(AWA/ESPN) - Lumberjacks d. Tom Stone/J.R. Person; Col. DeBeers d. John Pistoka; Buck Zumhofe d. W.T. Jones; Jake Milliman/Tommy James no decision vs. Jonnie Stewart/Mike Enos; Texas Hangman Psycho d. Curtis Hughes by DQ; ANGLE: Ox Baker watches every match. BOMB.

(LUCHA LIBRE) - Mogur/Octagon/Apolo Dantes d. Pirata Morgan/Jerry Estrada/Hombre Bala 2-3 falls; Angel Azteca/Xavier Cruz/El Paragon d. Emilio Charles Jr./Brazo/Brazo de Oro 2-3; Perro Aguayo d. Ringo Mendoza in 3rd fall when ref stops; HAIR VS. HAIR: Solomon Grundy d. Brazo de Plata 2-3. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(NWA/TBS) - [POWER HOUR]: (Joined in Progress) Landell d.

(NWA/TBS Cont.) - Little Bear; LOUISVILLE SLUGGER: Jim Cornette with Ric Flair highlights; Hansen d. Defuria. BOMB-PLUS.

[WCW]: R&R Ex d. Panzer/Horowitz; (RETROSPECTIVE) Sting-Flair feud; Rich/Horner d. State Patrol; Doug Furnas d. Thor; ANGLE: Ole/Flair threaten Sting & El Gigante appears from behind & Flair goes nuts; Hansen d. Reardon. RESTHOLD.

LINES OF THE WEEK

1. Jim Ross, NME: "Ole Anderson's one of the nicest guys. So is Charles Manson & Sirhan Sirhan." 2. Buddy Landell, NME: "If Pillman wants to impress me, let him make an apple salad or something." 3. Landell, NME: "Ted Turner & Jim Herd were having some rating problems & called me and asked, 'Would you come in and save us?'" 4. Bobby Heenan, PTW: "Tito can pick over 1600 heads of lettuce in one hour--with one hand." 5. Sgt. Slaughter/Lou Albano, COMEDY CHANNEL: (LA) "I'm a captain. He's a sergeant. I outrank him." (SS) "That's because he's so rank." 6. Bill Dundee/Jerry Lawler, WMC, on Eddie Gilbert: (BD) "I made a $5,000 deal with the devil." (JL) "For that kind of money, you could have made a deal with the King." 7. Eddie Gilbert, WMC: "I'm the best friend money can buy." 8. Gilbert, WMC, to Dundee: "I made a deal for Monday night. To help you out today, that requires what the common people call overtime." 9. Heenan/Gorilla Monsoon, PTW: (GM) "Maybe I can send the Hulkster to a Carribean island at your expense to recuperate." (BH) "Yeah, Pepper Gomez can pick him up in a Pinto and drive him there." 10. Jerry Lawler, WMC: "Snowman, somebody told me you were in the Waffle House wearing the belt the other day. I bet your wife has belt prints on her now."

11. Lawler, WMC: "Bruno, if you put a dime on your head, you'd look just like a nail." 12. Frank Sisson, CNWA: "If you've ever seen Makham Singh up close, you know where the horror is." 13. Monsoon, PTW, on "Coach" Bratten: "If that guy was a football coach, I'm a skydiver." 14. Vince McMahon/Jesse Ventura, WWF: (J) "What I don't understand is why they have carousels with jumping horses in Broome County. Ever tried to clean up after a horse with a broom, McMahon? (V) No, Jesse. (J) "I use a shovel. You probably use your hands." 15. Paul E. Dangerously, DANGER ZONE: "Here's the best of DOOM in action. Probably shot by that Jackie Crockett fellow." 16. McMahon/Ventura, WWF: (V) "There's a rumor going around that Playboy Buddy Rose is going to have a tummy tuck. (J) "Where's he gonna have it? Chico's hometown of Tijuana?" (V) "He may have to go to the veterinarian." 17. Sean Mooney, PTW, on Heenan: "He looks like he's standing on third base giving a bunt sign." 18. Ventura, WWF, on Jimmy Snuka: "If he's an example of a Fijian, I don't want to go there." 19. Sisson, CNWA, to J.T. Broth (Ballplayer's manager): "You struck out so many times, now you're a manager." 20. Sisson, CNWA, on Desiree Petersen: "If she was bleach, we'd understand it."

21. Lance Russell, NWA PRO, on Paul Sampson: "He looks like his hair was cut by Delilah...the Delilah being Scott Steiner." 22. Lee Marshall, IWA: "Running into Kokina is like starting your car and trying to drive it through a mountain." 23. Diamond D. Page, IWA, on JYD: "He ought to be pumping gas at Citgo." 24. Vince/Jesse, WWF: (J) "Rhythm & Blues was number 13 on the charts." (V) "With a footnote." 25. Stan Hansen, WWW: "I'm just like your worst toothache. I won't go away." 26. Dutch Mantel, WWW: "Stan Hansen doesn't spit tobacco. He swallows it." 27. Michael Hayes, NWA PRO: "Trying to out-amateur wrestle the Steiners is like a dog running in front of a parked car." 28. Hayes, NWA PRO: "There ain't no stop sign on DOOM's chest." 29. Brickhouse Brown, USWA, on Akbar offer: "$5,000 is just the shell. You want the whole nut."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Terry Funk, PRO WRESTLING SPOTLIGHT, on NWA: "Right now, I wouldn't want to even be in the same room with those people." 2. Missy Hyatt, NME: "Sting is not a top 10 contender." 3. Ted DiBiase, WWF: "I think the people of Cobb County are disgusting, vile, illiterate people and the Big Bossman doesn't even come up to that." 4. Tracy Ringolsby, DALLAS MORNING NEWS: "With all apologies to Lex Luger, Jose Canseco is the Total Package."

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK - 1. Heenan, PTW: "You know why Tito doesn't have freckles? They slide off." 2. Teddy Long, DANGER ZONE, to Paul E.: "Are you taking money to embarrass us?" 3. Heenan, PTW: "Do they have high schools in Cobb County?" 4. Mike Adams, CNWA: "How do you relate baseball to Madison Square Garden?" (Ballplayer is billed from MSG). 5. Bill Dundee, WMC: "Eddie, who did you hit?"

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. KLUTZ OF THE WEEK (Frank Sisson on Masked Eagle).

BEST PICTURES - PTW, Monsoon cutting pie. CNWA, Masked Eagle losing contact lenses. WWF, Savage's roadsign outfit. WWF, Savage acknowledging crowd.

DREADED GLITCH AWARD - WMC, errant camera shot of studio.

BLOOPER AWARD - Lee Marshall, IWA: "Larry Cameron from Calgary, Ontario."

ALL-CLICHE TEAM - 1. Ric Flair, WWW: "...to be the man, you gotta beat the man." 2. Dusty Rhodes, WWF: "in pullic, if you will."

TUBE TALK

CNWA has signed Kimala for card at Calgary Pavillion and wants Mike Shaw as Makham Singh for Kimala's opponent....NWA lost TV in Buffalo when WNYB, its local affiliate, went all-religious....Ric Carter and Rich Mancuso are now on a new 900 line called LIVE WRESTLING TALK. Call it at 900-370-2033....Ivan Koloff challenging Bob Backlund on IWA....Can you remember crowd reaction as dead as during WWW's Star Blazer-Mark Kyle? The few sounds were boos for Horner.... Jim Ross' Baltimore taped remotes were excellent on WCW and a fine last-hour pitch for the BASH. However, the syndie shows were among the worst to build a PPV I've ever seen.

Memphis/WMC show is a must for tape traders. Eddie Gilbert's heel angle on WMC was classic Eddie. It reminded me of some of his CWF stuff....At Mid-South Monday, DWBs will meet Lawler/Dundee and Lawler will get USWA title rematch with 2 refs vs. Snowman....Joel Goodhart puts up his hair vs. Lawler's in a softball game (Lawler's All-Stars vs. Squared Circle All-Stars) next Sunday in Jackson TN.

Late word is NWA WILL get the slot on KTVU in San Fran-Oakland on Sunday mornings this fall but one of the WWF shows will move to a net affiliate....But apparently as many as seven big-market stations which carry NWA are dickering to switch to WWF come fall. FSB.

SATELLITE ORBIT: The cover story in this month's ORBIT magazine (for dish owners) may have been on wrestling but it was more a tribute to the WWF. Only four short paragraphs were devoted in the lengthy report to the NWA and other groups.

INTERESTING TOPPERS: ORBIT's supposedly scientifically selected Top 15 of wrestling was indicative of the survey's flaws. Kerry Von Erich ahead of Sting????

10 O'CLOCK JUMP: With all the hoopla surrounding the possible jump of Ric Flair to the WWF, the controversy surrounding Mark Callous was overshadowed. Callous, according to insiders, was indeed suffering from intense leg pain which forced him off the NWA tour in Greensboro. But some office people felt Mark simply didn't want to put Lex Luger over in Baltimore.

WILL MARK JUMP?: Much speculation is going to surround the NWA's personnel in coming weeks. But Callous never signed a contract, so he could well jump to an interested Titan in short order.

VOTE FOR PAUL: Speaking of Callous, his manager, Paul E. Dangerously, received the backing of NWA exec Jim Herd at the recent Memphis stop. Road agent Bob Roop had ordered Dangerously the evening before in Birmingham (crowd: 400) to merely accompany Callous to the ring, sit in a chair and raise Mark's hand after the win. So, Paul complied and the match had absolutely no heat. Herd was told and reportedly stated he wasn't paying Paul E. a six-figure salary to sit in a chair, so Paul was back up to his histrionics in Memphis.

U.S. MALE: Curtis Thompson and Ricky Santana reportedly would like to make a WWF shot after their recent Portland stint but their size may be working against them.

MORE DANGER: Paul E.'s DANGER ZONE segs have been revived for NWA MAIN EVENT and NWA PRO effective over the weekend and Paul is reportedly going to be provided a camera crew to go into some New York locales for the WPIX NWA show.

NO TOP 25: No wrestling show cracked the Top-25 programs for 1989-90 on cable (dominated by ESPN's NFL games) but CLASH IX: NEW YORK KNOCKOUTS came the closest, finishing 37th with 2.49 million homes.

RATINGS RAP: We won't offer this in our usual block column this week because with the Fourth of July at midweek, it delayed computer figures on USA Network ratings. For the TBS shows during the weekend ending July 1, the numbers were: WCW, 2.7/7.5 (1.5 million homes); MAIN EVENT, 2.5/6.0, 1.38 million; POWER HOUR, 1.7/3.6 (947,000); POWER HOUR REPLAY, 0.7/7.0 (383,000). Next week, when we get the USA numbers, we will publish the full list.

OLE WATCH: For those keeping track, Ole's six-week average for WCW is a strong 2.8/7.4 and the numbers have been, not to coin a pun, almost rock steady since his first week of booking. The real tale will come in the several weeks upcoming: did the numbers rise because people were interested in the shows or was it simply the buildup toward Flair-Sting which kept them hooked?

SOUTHEAST SLINGERS: Genuine heat is developing between the stars of TV53 (Chattanooga) SOUTHEASTERN wrestling and performers for the old AWF group which used to hold the time slot on WFLI. The AWF guys are still running indie shows and are running TV spots slamming SE. SE host J.C. Carson vociferously answered the spots on the show last weekend.

ATHENS' ALLEY: This SOUTHEASTERN group is actually running shows every Friday at a small house in Athens TN, which proves that in wrestling, anything's possible.

FLYIN' BRIAN?: An indie show in Tennessee two weekends ago, featured the debut of TAPE UPDATE's Brian Tramel as B.T. Express. Brian is probably the first bulletin editor to ever hit the ring and I'm glad it's him and not me.

WHO'S GOT THE ACTION?: Action Media Group is a name which may not mean much to you. But AMG sells the national ads for the NWA syndie package as THE WRESTLING NETWORK. It also sells spots for several Andrews Entertainment shows, including USWA, as TWN-PLUS. NWA officials are reportedly thinking of pushing AMG to get out of the PLUS deal, which could be an economic jolt to Jerry Jarrett's package.

STILL SNOWING: Snowman defeated Jerry Lawler in the no ref match in Memphis last Monday to retain the USWA belt but Joey Maggs and Rex King beat the Dirty White Boys to keep the tag belts, as well, and Bill Dundee defeated Tony Anthony in the lights out match after the main event.

CRUISIN' NEW YORK: Chris Cruise and Terry Funk offered some incisive comments on their guest shot on John Arezzi's PRO WRESTLING SPOTLIGHT in New York recently. We'll have excerpts from their interview in next week's MATWATCH.

NETWORKING: We're told by station officials at KTVU in San Francisco-Oakland, one of the top indies in the U.S., that they have no plans to add NWA wrestling this fall, even though talk continues with Turner Program Services.

SLAMMIN' ALONG: Verne Langdon is being approached about franchising his SLAMMERS WRESTLING GYM to other cities in the U.S. Verne continues to develop plans for his second annual LEGENDS AWARDS Sept. 22-23 at Slammers.

AFTER SLAM: Latest talk we get is Hulk Hogan will not go right back into regular action after SUMMER SLAM but will probably be out doing movie work until late October, or at least until the heavy buildup for SURVIVOR SERIES.

LANIGAN'S LAMENT: John Lanigan had an interesting comment in his recent REPORT. The WWF show with Warrior-Rude on top at the War Memorial drew 2,000. Three years ago in the same building, with Billy Jack Haynes vs. Hercules as the main event, three times as many people showed. Sign of the times????

DADDY LEX: In case you wonder, Paul E.'s line about Luger being a lousy father was a complete surprise to the booker but has triggered more comment than any line in some time. With no personal issue evolving for the Luger-Callous match, Paul E. cleared the line with Luger before he used it.

REMEMBER THE RATES: I hate to bring this up but please remember, effective next Monday, the 16th, the rates for MATWATCH increase. Please note in the order form on the back page of this issue.

HERD ON FUTURE: CONTRACTS & CROWDS

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Last week, in the first of a 2-part interview, NWA senior vice president Jim Herd looked at personnel situations and current changes in his promotion. This week, he speaks frankly about arena attendance, talent contracts and TV.)

MATWATCH: Jim, do you think a Sting victory in Baltimore is going to do a great deal to turn around attendance?

HERD: No. At least, not right away. Oh, we hope we're going to do well in the long run. But nobody's drawing well right now. Look at what the WWF is drawing. By their standards---it's atrocious. They had 2,500 people here at the Omni (in Atlanta) and 3,700 in St. Louis. They hit their big houses here and there but no like they once did.

MATWATCH: Can ANYTHING bring people back to the arenas?

HERD: If we had that answer, we'd have already done it.

MATWATCH: Lots of talk is buzzing that you're trying to eliminate contracts. That you want to get out of a lot of the ones you have, possibly to save money. Is that true?

HERD: We're not trying to "get out" of any contracts. But we're no longer going to give contracts to midcard guys. We have to be more flexible and the inability to change people at that level because of contracts is detrimental to what we're trying to do.

MATWATCH: A lot of people have still asked why you haven't given a shot to younger people like Scotty the Body or Owen Hart and with the way things look right now, it doesn't seem this is the promotion people like they will get a shot.

HERD: That's not true, either. Look, I'm very interested in introducing new people and so is Ole (Anderson, NWA booker). I look at tapes all the time. We've had a young guy who's about 6-10 from right here in Atlanta who's in training now. But I assure you, you'll continue to see new people come into the NWA.

MATWATCH: In recent weeks, some people have told me they feel if you were going to revive old names, there were a number of others you could have done much better with, say, Ricky Steamboat, for example.

HERD: Look, I know what people say. The truth is: Steamboat is not here because he doesn't want to be here. People are blaming us for that and it's just not factual. I want you to know it's not factual. All Steamboat would have to do is pick up the phone. He's sure not making what we were paying him when he was here.

MATWATCH: Does Ole have a timetable to prove himself?

HERD: As I've said before, Ole Anderson will be judged by the success of the ratings on TBS and how well we do in our venues. Right now, our Saturday show has been doing very well. And the ratings are going to be all right, particularly when we get our Friday night and Sunday shows in consistent time periods. But the direction of attendance in our venues is something we haven't found the answer for and despite all the helpful suggestions we get, I'm not sure anyone has the answer. If we did, we'd have already exercised it.

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